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Kulaśekhara

**—O? Vi??up?da Śr? Bhakti-siddh?nta Sarasvat?
'Prabhup?da'**

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Introduction to Birth, Spiritual Identity and Dynasty

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In ancient times, there was a great virtuous king named Dh?dhavrata from the Śera royal dynasty in Kallinagara. He was *dharm?tm?* (fully dedicated to the religious principles).

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He had no progeny.

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In the end, he performed penance for begetting a son, and as a result of that penance, he was blessed by jewel-like son, in the 27th Kalyabda year called Par?bhava (27 years after Kali-yuga had begun) during the Punarvasu constellation (*nak?atra*).

Alternative: In the end, he performed penance to beget a son, and as a result, he was blessed with a jewel-like son in the 27th year of Kalyabda (27 years after the beginning of Kali-yuga),, known as Par?bhava, during the Punarvasu constellation (*nak?atra*).

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The son was named Kulaśekhara.

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In the Śr? Vai??ava *samprad?ya* (disciplic succession), Kulaśekhara is considered an incarnation of Lord Vi??u's Kaustubha gem.

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Kallinagara is located in the Malabar (Malay?lama or M? l?v?ra) region of Kerala.

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The kings of the Śera dynasty have been ruling here since ancient times.

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Ancient Kerala is now part of the Triv??kura (Travancore) state.

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Education and State Expansion (Expansion of the Kingdom)

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In a short time (In just a few days), Kulaśekhara became proficient in Tamil and Sanskrit languages, and he deeply studied all the scriptures in these languages, including the *Vedas*, *Ved?nta*, *R?m?ya?a*, and the eighteen *Pur??as*.

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Not only that, he also became proficient in diplmoacy (*r? ja-n?ti*), military science (*yuddha-vidy?*), and archery (*dhanurveda*).

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Due to the predominance of *sattva-gu?a* (mode of goodness), he dedicated his life solely to the service of the lotus feet of Lord N?r?ya?a.

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After ascending the throne, Kulaśekhara reestablished the ideal of R?ma R?jya (kingdom resembling the rule of Lord R?ma) in the country.

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He was not just the king of Kerala; rather, his title suggests that he was the overlord (emperor, *adhṛśvara*) of Kerala, Pṛṣṭya, and Cola—these three kingdoms.

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These three kingdoms have been highly renowned in the south since ancient times.

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In a short time, due to his extraordinary valor and royal qualities (qualities befitting a king), he established his dominance over all the neighboring states.

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Ultimately, he realized the insignificance, transience, and impermanence of human strength and decided to take refuge at the feet of Bhagavān.

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His heart began to ache with separation from Bhagavān.

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A strong desire arose in his heart to visit the renowned
holy places like Śr? Ra?gam and Ve?kat?cala.

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In this way, the characteristics of devotion began to
manifest clearly within him.

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Kulasekhara's love for Godhead

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"While listening to the story (narration) of the Śr? R?m?
ya?a, he often became deeply immersed in *bh?va* (ecstasy).

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To punish R?va?a, he declared war and assembled his
vast army at the seashore.

Alternative: To punish R?va?a, he declared war and
appeared on the seashore with his huge army.

**of Vai??ava Principles (the rules of propriety for Vai??
avas)**

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The Mah?r?ja's revered (worshipable) Deity was Lord R?
macandra.

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He had adorned the Deity of Lord Śr? R?macandra with a
variety of precious ornaments.

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The entire responsibility for these ornaments and the
service of the Deity rested on the Vai??avas.

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One day, due to the ministers' conspiracy, a precious
necklace was stolen from Bhagav?n's ornaments.

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The ministers and courtiers made every effort to
convince the king that it was the Vai??avas who had
committed the theft.

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Mah?r?ja Kulaśekhara believed that the Vai??avas could
never behave in such a manner.

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He resolved in his heart to establish the dignity of the
Vai??avas by demonstrating the strength of devotees.

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He summoned some venomous snakes and placed them
in a container, then he himself put his hand into the
container and said to the ministers—

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If my dear friends, the Vaiṣṇavas, are indeed guilty, then these snakes will surely bite my hand; otherwise, they cannot harm me at all.

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Everyone watched in astonishment as not a single snake moved from its place; they remained perfectly still, as if enchanted by some mystical incantation.

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Seeing this, the ministers and courtiers were greatly embarrassed and fell at the Mahārāja's feet, admitting their fault.

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*Renunciation of Association of the sense enjoyers
and gross materialists and Dedication oneself to the
Service of Śrī Rāganaṭhaja***

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Meanwhile, Kulaśekhara contemplated inwardly—

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*vara? hutavaha-jv?l? pañjar?ntar-vyavasthiti?
na śauri-cint?-vimukha-jana-samv?sa-vaiśasam*

(K?ty?yana-sa?hit?)

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—It is better to dwell in a cage filled with blazing flames;
however, may I never have to face the calamity of
associating who averse to thinking of K???a. [Even if I should
die in a blazing fire or be trapped for all time in a cage, I still
do not want the company of persons averse to thinking of
K???a.]

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It is the duty of every person who wishes to engage in
devotional service (*bhajana*) to certainly renounce the
company of those who are sense enjoyers.

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Having made this decision, Kulaśekhara handed over the
entire kingdom to his son and sought refuge at the feet of Śr?
Ra?gan?thaj?.

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While residing in Śr? Ra?ga-k?etra, he had the walls of
the third enclosure of the Śr? Ra?g?n?thaj? temple, along
with several houses and pavilions, constructed.

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Even today, when searching for the ancient names of the streets in the city of Śrī Raṅgam, the locals point to 'Śrī Kulaśekhara Mārga'.

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His Composed Works

The Books composed by Him

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Kulaśekhara composed numerous sweet verses imbued with the mellows of devotional service (*bhakti-rasa*) in both Tamil and Sanskrit.

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'Perumāla Tirumāla' is a highly esteemed literary work in the Tamil language.

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"In Sanskrit, he composed a profoundly honest and work titled 'Mukunda-māla-stotra' that unfailingly inspires the mood of devotional service in the reader's heart."

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Mahārāja Kulaśekhara is famous among all the Vaiṣṇavas of India as the author of Mukunda-mālā-stotra.

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This *stotra-grantha* (book consisting of excellent prayers), with its sweetness of language and delicacy of transcendental emotions, has no rival.

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This work is highly revered and widely promoted.

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Time of Kulaśekhara

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According to recent researchers, Śrī Kulaśekhara was present during the 10th century (*śaka* era).

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When Yāmunācārya was present in Śrī Rāgam, he also resided there, engaged in his activities."

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In this context, it is stated that following the example of God-deva's marriage, Kulaśekhara also arranged the marriage of his daughter with Lord Rāganāthajī.

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Perhaps Kulaśekhara arrived in Śrī Rāgam just before Yāmunācārya.

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And even before him, divine saints (*divya-sāris*) like Viṣṇu-citta and Goda (from the Alvara tradition) had taken refuge at the feet of Lord Rāganātha.